

Registered Nonpublic Schools (Not Seeking State Approval)

Guidelines & Instructions

Paul G. Pastorek
State Superintendent of Education

July 2009

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Registered Nonpublic Schools (Not Seeking State Approval)

FROM: Dr. Jackie Bobbett, Section Supervisor
Ancillary Resources Section
Division of Curriculum Standards

SUBJECT: Registered School Guidelines and Instructions

Registered nonpublic schools not seeking state approval must report student enrollments to the State each year in order to comply with Louisiana's compulsory attendance law (R.S. 17:232 (C) and (D)) and to remain in good standing.

Please be advised that the Children's Code authorizes peace officers, probation officers, and attendance officers to stop and detain any child from the age of seven through sixteen whom the officer reasonably believes to be absent from school during normal school hours. The officer may question the child about his or her reasons for being absent, may transport the child to a school or a receiving center, and may file a complaint through the Families in Need of Services (FINS) project in order to properly address the underlying causes of pre-delinquent behavior.

Child Welfare and Attendance (CWA) officers are required to investigate cases of nonenrollment or unexcused absences, give notices, and visit the home or place of residence. Child Welfare and Attendance Officers are mandated to report instances of habitual absence or tardiness to Juvenile Court, which may determine that the child should be placed in a public or private institution where school may be provided.

Furthermore, State law gives the District Attorney the authority to strictly enforce cases of habitual absence or tardiness as well as the authority to bring cases under the criminal statute that provides for fines, imprisonment, and/or community service if a court determines that a parent has exercised improper supervision of a minor. Violators of these laws and provisions may be fined up to \$250 for each offense or imprisoned up to 30 days, or both, or a combination of forty hours of court-approved community service and attendance at a court-approved family counseling program by both a parent or legal custodian and the minor.

House Bill 178 of the 2008 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature now requires evidence of current immunization against meningococcal disease as a condition for student entry into sixth grade and for students eleven years old entering any grade.

Exemptions include: parent/guardian waivers for religious or personal reasons, written statement from physician stating contraindicated medical reasons, shortage of supply of vaccine.

Chief administrators are responsible for checking and ensuring enforcement of this law.

Please note that students enrolled in a Registered Nonpublic School (Not Seeking State Approval)

- are **not** considered enrolled in an SBESE-Approved Home Study Program;
- are **not** eligible for Tuition Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) scholarships; and
- are **not** required to take state testing. However, testing is available upon request through the local school system for only the 4th and 8th grade LEAP. Contact the school system in January for applicable testing dates and fees.

Applications and guidelines for the SBESE-Approved Home Study Program may be found at <http://www.louisianaschools.net/ide/curr/1650.html>.

To become a Registered Nonpublic School (Not Seeking State Approval) submit an official, signed letter registering the school year, name of your school, contact information, and total number of students enrolled. You must notify the Department of Education by the thirtieth day after the school session begins. Send only one copy of the letter, and keep a copy for your records. Your registration will be maintained electronically at the Louisiana Department of Education.

Mail letters to:

Attn: Dr. Jackie Bobbett, Section Supervisor
Ancillary Resources Section
Louisiana Department of Education
P.O. Box 94064-9064
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

If you have questions or need further information, please contact Brenda Neff at, Brenda.Neff@la.gov, (225) 342-9969, or at the toll free number above.

JB/bn